THE PAPAL COMMISSION AND THE PENTATEUCH

CHARLES A. BRIGGS
AND
FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL

JAN 1 5 1993

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OXFORD

Arthur Russell oneth me
Is me jure tenet,
And I his Booke confesse to be
Quicunque me invenit.

WITHDRAWN

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THE PAPAL COMMISSION AND THE PENTATEUCH

BY

THE REV. CHARLES A. BRIGGS,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA AND SYMBOLICS,
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK

AND

BARON FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL,

MEMBER OF THE CAMBRIDGE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE following correspondence took place during our holiday, away from most of our books and papers.

The Answers of the Pontifical Biblical Commission appeared officially, with the Pope's Approbation, dated June 27th, in the *Revue Biblique* for July. The Answers are also given, in Latin and English, in the *Tablet* for July 28th, but with still some uncertainty as to whether they had received the Papal assent, since the *Osservatore Romano* had indeed published the Answers, but without the Approbation.

The weeks which have elapsed since, in the Engadine and in Surrey, we thus re-formulated to each other the slowly-acquired, deliberate convictions forced upon us by our many years' closest study of the Pentateuch and of the critical work which four generations of scholars have expended on this great complex of writings, have in nowise abated our sense of the importance and inevitableness of these positions, or of our responsibilities and duties as Biblical

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Students within the Christian Church. We therefore now publish herewith these much-tested reflexions and requirements of two working scholars and life-long lovers of organized Christianity, sure that truth sincerely sought and simply spoken can never completely miscarry amongst men, and confident of contributing our share towards the advent of that most necessary, most fruitful, and most difficult thing, — the definitive, operative recognition, by Ecclesiastical Authority, of sound critical historical method, and of this method's most assured results.

C. A. B.
F. v. H.

All-Saints Day, 1906.

THE PAPAL COMMISSION
AND THE PENTATEUCH

I

HOTEL BELLE-ILE, CADENABBIA,
Sept. 4th, 1906.

My dear Friend,

I was surprised and dismayed when I read in the *Corriere della Sera*, the opinion of the Biblical Commission respecting the Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch. When we were in Rome together, I had the very highest authority for the statement that I have made in many places, that a reasonable amount of liberty would be given in Biblical Criticism, so long as its results did not conflict with the established dogmas of the Church.

What, my dear Friend, does this change of position mean? The Church has never committed itself officially to the Mosaic authorship

of the Pentateuch; and to recognize that Hebrew laws and institutions were a development of a divinely guided Theocracy, rather than given all at once to Moses at the beginning of the Hebrew Commonwealth, suits the Roman Catholic position as to Christian Dogma and Institutions, better than the usual Protestant position that we must build on the New Testament alone. I can see no good reason why the Authorities in Rome should make such a sudden and abrupt change of policy.

I have, as you know, devoted many years of study to the problem of the Pentateuch, and also to the larger question of the Reunion of Christendom. I understood on the highest authority and from conversation with the Pope himself, that he was broad-minded, generous-hearted and earnest in his purpose to reform the Church and do what he could for the reunion of the Protestant Churches with Rome. It would be a great grief to me, and it would dash many hopes to the ground, if it should appear that I have been mistaken, and that I have misled others also.

What can you say, to relieve my mind? What can the many other Old Testament scholars who, like yourself, are my friends, say and do? Are they all to be put under the ban?

I

If the Opinion of the Biblical Commission as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is merely the opinion of the members of the Commission, it will carry little weight; for while there are many able scholars in the Commission whom I honour for their work in many different fields of theology, the Commission is singularly destitute of Biblical critics; and hence its Opinion, standing for that of the average member, or even for that of the majority of the members, can, whatever its importance in ecclesiastical circles, be of but little or no consequence before the tribunal of Biblical scholarship. I recall my studies of the large work of Rector Janssen on Dogmatic Theology. I have used it, with profit and admiration, in the field of Scholastic Theology; but his treatment of the Bible is so unscholarly, and his use of the Hebrew language shows such profound ignorance, that no serious worker could deem him competent to give an opinion in matters of Hebrew Scholarship, and his name discredits at once the report of the Commission. The name of Vigouroux stands for an antiquated apologetic, distinguished by special pleading and a closing of the eyes to everything that does not

count for his side of the case. If these two names are fairly representative of the majority of the Commission, its report is indeed without value.

It is exceedingly unfortunate, if it be true, that this Report has received the endorsement of the Pope; for whilst the Holy Father assured me himself that such decisions, even when approved by the Pope, have not the character of infallibility, yet his name when given to any decision, carries an authority with the faithful beyond estimation. Scholars may continue to question it, but the Church as a body is likely to acquiesce, and even scholars are thereby perplexed and troubled.

If this decision should go no further, it will have only a temporary influence, such as the decisions—on the very same subject-matter—of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland against William Robertson Smith, and of the American Presbyterian General Assembly against me. In both these cases it is now evident that the action of these ecclesiastical bodies did not hinder the progress of Biblical Criticism, but really hastened its triumph. The same result may come from the opinion of the Biblical Commission; indeed, it will certainly do so, for insofar as it can have with scholars any influence at

all, it will but stir them up to renew their investigations, and these will make our cause all the more triumphant.

I cannot think that the authorities of Rome will be so blind as to put this decision in a new Syllabus. The Syllabus of Pius IX greatly injured the Catholic Church. It has been the fashion in recent years to apologize for it and to explain it away. The Holy Father himself assured me that it did not come under the category of Infallibility. If the Holy Father should issue a new Syllabus, it would amount to nothing more than a temporary opinion. But it would undoubtedly have great influence in the Catholic Church. It would be a stumbling-block to scholars; it would rejoice the enemies of the Church; it would reawaken Protestant polemic; it would greatly injure all irenic movements; it would make the present Pontificate a desperate failure, instead of being, as we hoped, a great reformatory influence in the Church.

Anything that I can do to prevent so great an evil, I will do, as a matter of duty, and as a call to work for conciliation or to battle with truth and righteousness as circumstances may direct. I had determined to devote the remainder of my life to irenic work, to the removal of prejudices, to the distinction between what is essential in

religion, and what is a matter of private opinion and practice, and to do all in my power in the direction of the reunion of Christendom. I had laid aside my work in Biblical Criticism for this higher work. I was content with what we have already achieved, and willing to leave the remaining problems to the younger men to solve. But if it is necessary again to buckle on armour and battle for Biblical Criticism, to which I have devoted so much of my life, and for which I have laboured and suffered not a little, I will not hesitate to do so.

II

So far as the question of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is concerned, *that* has been settled in the arena of Biblical scholarship in the negative. There are scholastic Theologians who still resist this result, and pious Bishops and Priests who are still afraid of it; and there are still many, probably the great majority of lay Christians, who care little if at all about it; but there are few Hebrew scholars, competent of their own knowledge to weigh the evidence, who have any doubt concerning it.

I. It is evident from the form of the first question answered by the Biblical Commission,

that it was framed for a negative answer. It is not the question of a doubter, or of one sincerely desiring to know the truth; but of one determined to magnify the evidence in favour of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and to minimize the evidence against it. The evidence against it is tersely and uncandidly stated as "arguments amassed by Critics." No indication is given of their nature, their number, or their importance. The Commission decides that they are not "of sufficient weight." It is altogether probable—it is well-nigh certain—that the majority of the Commissioners did not in fact weigh them; and therefore their opinion that they are of insufficient weight is mere prejudice and nothing more. If the question had been an honest one, it would at least have mentioned these arguments. The arguments are as follows:

(1) The language of the four great documents is so different, that they must have been composed by different writers. The difference of language extends to a very large *vocabulary*, each of these documents having its own Lexicon. And these differences are not merely differences of synonym; they are differences representing different centuries in the historical development of the Hebrew language. These documents of the Pentateuch represent a language that did

not exist until centuries after the death of Moses. The evidence for all this has been given only in part in Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, and in my *Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*, and many other recent works; but it is fully given in our new Hebrew Lexicon, now completed, in which Drs. Brown and Driver and myself have carefully examined and classified the uses of all Hebrew words in the Old Testament according to their historical development in the literature. It is impossible for any one to study the complete series of these words as we have done, without coming to the conclusion which we have reached in entire concord, that Moses could not have written any one of the great documents of which the Pentateuch is composed.

(2) The *style* of the different documents of the Pentateuch is so different that it implies several different authors, and this again, not living at the same time, but at widely different periods of history. It is safe to say that the differences in style are not merely such as distinguish the chief dogmatic authorities of modern Rome, such as Billot and Janssen, but such rather as distinguish these still living writers from the Medieval Schoolmen, Duns Scotus and Bonaventura. To my mind it would be easier to prove that Thomas

Aquinas was the author of these four theological systems, than to show that the four great documents of the Pentateuch had one and the same author, Moses.

(3) The *historic situation* of the several documents is different. The institutions indicate very different periods of history, corresponding with the periods reflected in the Historical and Prophetical books. One might as well put all the Ceremonies, Usages and Laws of the Church back into the time of Gregory the Great, and attribute them all to him, as to attribute the great Pentateuchal Documents to Moses.

(4) The strongest evidence to my mind is that from *Biblical Theology*. I have been many years Professor of Biblical Theology. I have made an inductive study of all the Hebrew terms of theology for the Lexicon, and of all the theological conceptions for my Lectures. If there is such a thing as a history of doctrine in the Church, there was a history of doctrine in Israel. The literature reflects that historical development, and may be ranged historically in accordance with that development. The document that we name *E* goes in general with the Ephraimitic prophets Amos and Hosea, the document *J* with the early prophets of Judah ; *D*, Deuteronomy, is nearest to Jeremiah ; and *P* to Ezechiel and

the Chronicles. This cannot be denied, but must be weighed and explained by those who insist upon the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

I have stated four great lines of argument, based all of them not upon theories but on facts —on a great number of lexical and syntactical differences, differences of style and of historic situation, and differences of theology all along the line of religious faith and morals. Men are so constituted that they can ignore evidence however weighty. They may refuse to consider it as of any importance, from prejudice or from indifference. But I am sure that no one can go over the immense detail of these arguments without being convinced that they are of sufficient weight to disprove the traditional opinion that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.

II. The Biblical Commission, having dismissed the manifold proofs of the critics in a short sentence, heaps up "the very many evidences to the contrary contained in both Testaments collectively, the perpetual agreement of the Hebrew people, and the constant tradition of the Church, as well as the proofs furnished by internal criticism of the text." This seems on the surface to be of sufficient weight. But the critics have carefully and thoroughly examined all this

evidence, and find it amounts to nothing more than a floating tradition, without historical basis, without verification, and without authoritative vindication of any kind whatever.

(1) "The very many evidences to the contrary contained in both Testaments, taken collectively," are not specified, but they are well known to all Biblical scholars. They are chiefly passages in which certain laws, predictions and sayings are put in the mouth of Moses. But this amounts to nothing more than the putting of the Psalms in the mouth of David. The Biblical Commission will hardly go so far as to attribute the Psalter to David. This Biblical custom of using the name of Moses for the Law, that of David for the Psalms, and that of Solomon for Wisdom is so sustained by the similar usage of other nations and literatures that it is no argument whatever for authorship. On the other hand all the arguments used by the critics against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch are evidences contained in the Old Testament itself. And surely they are many, many more in quantity than those used by the anti-critics. If the passages cited by the anti-critics have the meaning they ascribe to them, then the Old Testament is in irreconcilable conflict with itself on the question in debate.

(2) "The perpetual agreement of the Hebrew people" and (3) "the constant tradition of the Church" amount to nothing more than the continuation of the Biblical usage of "Moses" as the name of the Pentateuch and of the personified Law. Neither the Hebrew people nor the Church has ever undertaken an authoritative investigation of this tradition, or verified and confirmed it. It does not belong to authoritative tradition, but to unverified and unauthorized tradition.

(4) "The proofs furnished by internal criticism of the text" are new to me. I await a statement of them with great interest. I am confident that the Commission cannot present them. This heaping up of evidence for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch consists of words, nothing more.

III. The correctness of my criticism of the first question answered by the Biblical Commission in the negative, is confirmed by their answers to the second and third questions. The opinions that Moses "entrusted the writing of it" (the Pentateuch) "to some other person or persons, but in such manner that they faithfully rendered his meaning, wrote nothing contrary to his will, and omitted nothing"; that "the work thus formed, approved by Moses as the principal and inspired

author, was made public under his name"; and that "Moses in his work used sources, i.e. written documents or oral traditions," were proclaimed by Biblical Critics in the infancy of Biblical Criticism, more than a century ago, as a reasonable solution of the problem according to the knowledge of the Hebrew language, literature, history, and theology that then existed. The Biblical Commission have evidently learned nothing from the splendid work of Biblical scholarship during the past century. They deliberately ignore it, or else have not thought it worth their while to study the works of modern scholars. For the history of Biblical Criticism makes it evident that those who recognize different hands and different documentary sources in the Pentateuch cannot attribute the authorship or instigation and revision of the Pentateuch to Moses, for the reason that the evidences of different hands and different documents are differences of language, style, historical circumstance, religious institutions, doctrines of faith and morals representing several different periods of Hebrew history. Some of these hands were as far from Moses as Jeremiah and Ezra, and from one another as Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezechiel, and the Chronicler. If there is any such thing as a history of the Hebrew language,

a historic development of doctrine in the Old Testament, a history of Hebrew law, institution, and literature: the hands that wrote the great documents of the Pentateuch were hands that wrote many centuries after Moses, and Moses has no responsibility whatever for their work.

IV. The fourth question and its answer is an evident concession to the few Hebrew scholars of the Commission. It recognizes that "some modifications have been introduced into it" (the Pentateuch), "such as additions after the death of Moses, either inserted by an inspired author, or attached to the text as glosses or interpretations; words and forms translated from the ancient language to more recent language; and, finally, faulty readings to be ascribed to the error of amanuenses, concerning which it is lawful to investigate and judge according to the laws of criticism." But this concession is qualified by the characteristic formula: "Due regard being paid to the judgment of the Church."

How wide is the door opened by this problematic and hesitating opinion?

(1) It is admitted that investigation and judgment must be *according to the laws of criticism.* If this is so, then, it necessarily follows that the laws of criticism must determine the entire investigation, and not merely any definite part of

it. But then, what sense is there in the qualification that "regard" must be "paid to the judgment of the Church"? Is the Church, or indeed even Scholastic Theology alone, to judge that the judgments pronounced by the laws of criticism are false? It might be said that the Church has the right to a judgment in the determination of the laws of criticism. But if the Church recognizes the laws of criticism, it must abide by the verdict of those laws. But to recognize that the laws of criticism must judge in these investigations, and then intimate that the Church must be the final judge, is taking back with one hand what is offered with the other, and is open to the grave charge of insincerity.

(2) The distinction between additions "inserted by an inspired author" and additions "attached to the text as glosses or interpretations" seems, on the face of it, to imply a dangerous heresy, for which certainly the Biblical Critics of my acquaintance would refuse responsibility. For it seems clearly to assert that the glosses and interpretations attached to the text are not from inspired authors, and hence that a considerable, but undetermined, amount of the Pentateuch is not inspired. Now the chief work of Biblical Criticism at the present time is just this work of detecting the glosses and interpreta-

tions of the older documents by later hands. The number of these is constantly increasing. Hence the inevitable result of this decision of the Biblical Commission is to withdraw inspiration from a considerable portion of the Pentateuch, and to render a further very considerable portion of it of doubtful inspiration. This is certainly a more dangerous position than any that has been taken up by sober critics. The only safe position is that the Canon as it stands is an inspired book ; that the inspiration of the sacred writings does not depend upon Amos and Ezra or any other known author ; and that the inspiration of the glosses and additions is just as sure as the inspiration of the originals. In fact, it may be said of a considerable portion of the Hebrew literature, that it is just the editors and glossators who give the earlier documents that religious flavour and propriety that makes them fully fitted for religious use. This is certainly true of the Psalter and the sentences of Wisdom, and is no less true of the laws of the Pentateuch. If an Index or Syllabus of prohibited writings or propositions is to be of any real fairness or value, such heresies of ultra-conservative Scholastics as this dangerous opinion of the Biblical Commission should be branded by it, rather than those minor errors into which Biblical Critics some-

times stumble in their eagerness to solve difficult problems in new and dangerous fields.

(3) The intimation that there are "words and forms translated from the ancient language into more recent language" recognizes that there is a history of words and forms in the Hebrew language. That recognition is fatal to the opinions of the Biblical Commission, for Hebrew lexicography compels the conclusion that these words and forms cannot be explained as mere translations, but must be recognized as original to the documents, and if so, then the late date of the documents inevitably follows. The Biblical Commission have thus given a sword into the hands of the Critics with which they themselves will be slain.

III

The Biblical Commission might do a great and noble work for Christianity and the reunion of Christendom, if it would devote itself to the great Biblical problems of this age. I venture to suggest some of them. (1) The preparation of a Hebrew Old Testament, on the basis of a study of all existing Codices. (2) The preparation of a Greek Bible, on the basis of the chief ancient authorities. (3) The preparation of a

new edition of the Latin Bible. (4) A new and more thorough Polyglot. Why is it that, with a few notable exceptions, all this is left to Protestant scholars? If the Biblical Commission would undertake some such work as this, under the leadership of the few competent Hebrew scholars in their midst, they would rejoice the hearts of all students of the Bible; Catholic, Protestant, and even Jewish scholars throughout the world would rally about them with enthusiasm. They would do much to disprove the reproach against the Catholic Church that it neglects the Bible and warps its teachings in the interest of traditional errors; and they would greatly advance the movement for the reunion of Christendom. Thus far, the Biblical Commission have not justified their existence. All their decisions have been in scholastic form, in the interests of the unsifted contentions of Scholastic Theology, and have grieved and discouraged all serious students of the Bible.

What, my dear friend, do the Biblical Commission really hope to accomplish by the publication of such opinions as these? They cannot in any way stay the progress of Biblical Criticism in the Protestant world, where it has been chiefly advanced in the past century. They may indeed obstruct Biblical studies in the Catholic world,

by grieving and discouraging the many Catholic Biblical scholars who have done so much in recent years for Biblical learning. But if this be their aim, they weaken the Catholic Church in its entire relation to the Bible; they give the adversaries of the Church an opportunity for re-asserting its antagonism to Biblical Christianity; they conjure up a fresh conflict with science and erect another stumbling-block to scholars; and build up an additional barrier to the reunion of Christendom.

The scholastic Theologians, who seem to be in the saddle again, have done mischief enough already. They have alienated a large proportion of educated men and women from the Church, especially in Catholic countries. We were gradually coming to a better state of affairs. Many scholars have become interested in the reunion of Christendom, and have been ready to make great sacrifices, and to labour with zeal and enthusiasm for that great cause. They have sought anxiously to solve the historic problems, hard enough at the best, which distract and divide Christendom, and to do so without outrage to sound historical method. Now the Biblical Commission throw into the arena another challenge to conflict. It is evident that the majority, or the spokesmen of that Commission, do not sin-

cerely desire the application of historical method to historical subject-matters, or the peace, prosperity, and reunion of Christendom. They prefer direct conflict with scholarship and science, and discord with their fellow-Christians, to the relinquishment, or even to the permitted questioning, of their traditional scholastic refinements and dangerously abstract, *a priori*, artificial views. It may be that whom God desires to destroy, He first makes mad. They would plunge the Church into the gulf to save their own interests. But the Church will not go into the gulf. It will eventually throw off its incompetent advisers; and other counsellors, more worthy, will take their place, and the movement for right method in the right place, for the union of sincere scholarship and science with deep faith, peace, and charity will go on, all the more rapidly for the temporary check and the inevitable, practical demonstration of the utter fruitlessness and acute danger of such direct conflict with a huge mass of facts. May God guide the present Pontiff, so devout and noble-minded, and so zealous, speedily to see through the dangerous incompetence of these reactionary functionaries who, as far as man can do so, are riding the Church to ruin, and to replace them by other faithful men, deeply trained and fully competent scholars, who will

act in accordance with what we are convinced are the difficult, great ends, and saintly desires of his true mind and heart.

Sincerely yours,

C. A. BRIGGS.

II

HINDHEAD, HASLEMERE,
September 29th, 1906.

My dear Professor,

Your important and impressive letter was of necessity both a pain and a pleasure to receive. A pain; for the points which you so vigorously press upon me, cannot fail to be distressing to one who is a Catholic as well as a Scholar; and a pleasure, because of your deeply religious mind and nobly respectful attitude towards the Catholic and Roman Church, and of your rare competence in the subject-matter immediately concerned. I shall attempt to answer your inquiries concerning the decision itself and the probable future of Roman Catholic Biblical Scholarship, after first making it clear why I too cannot help thinking that you and I have a right to an emphatic opinion in this question—that there is even a strict duty incumbent upon us just now to give public expression to these our perplexities and conclusions. Thus my remarks will fall under three heads: personal matters;

the answer of the Commission; and the special helps, hindrances, and outlook of Biblical Scholarship in the Roman Catholic Church.

I

It is the simple truth if I say that I would not and could not consider this essentially two-sided matter except with a man who thus combines a deep respect for Rome's special greatness and immense potential, indeed actual fruitfulness in the noblest, deepest Christian life and truth, with a rarely great competence in the subject of the literary and historical character of the Pentateuch. When the American Presbyterian General Assembly publicly tried, formally condemned, and crippled you to the best of its ability, it did so on the double ground of your Pentateuchal positions and of your Popish heresies: you were as explicitly condemned for insisting upon a "Romish" Purgatory as for holding a "Rationalist" Hexateuch. And since then you have moved out of the acuter Protestantism of Presbyterianism into the *Via Media* of the Episcopal Church, with its considerable Catholic affinities. Indeed, no man who knows you could doubt the sincerity and generosity with which you recognize, and strive to spread the recognition of, many amongst

Rome's special rights and gifts. And if these your irenic studies and endeavours now cover some forty years : your splendidly close, courageous, and persistent labours in Pentateuchal matters must be fully as ancient. If any one will study the proceedings of your trial, your volume on the Hexateuch, and lastly your lion's share in the great Hebrew Lexicon, in which you study so minutely the successive terms, and successive meanings of terms, of theological and moral import in the Hebrew Old Testament, he will see that I am not exaggerating ; and he will realize, if need be, the massive *factualness*, the serried, interdependent ranks of fact upon fact, —fact before, beside, behind fact ; the immense, largely silent, unrecorded labour ; the patient testing and continuous improvement of methods ; the humble faith in God and deeply Christian reverence for reality, however obscure-seeming, however scorned by the impatient, the sceptical, or the complete in their own eyes—he will realize all this as the true subject-matter and the difficult, but increasingly attainable, equipment of Old Testament research. If any man, then, has a right to speak on Pentateuchal research within the Christian Churches, it is you.

As to myself, already, alas ! fifty-four years old, I have, ever since eighteen, deeply, and I trust

increasingly, loved and practised the Catholic and Roman faith, and have striven my poor best to serve and advance it. Born in Florence, my imagination was early impressed with the great figures of Dante and of Savonarola, and, later on, by those of Marsilio Ficino and his fellow Platonizers. The spacious outlook and virile depth and tenacity of that early Catholic Renaissance still fire my blood ; neither Protestantism as such (so pathetically understandable, yet so largely unjust because ungenerous), nor a bitter puny anti-Protestantism, a Catholicism contracted to a mere negation of negations, or to a system of the greatest possible exclusion of trouble, trial, and danger can (so all my being tells me) be the final, God-willed solution for all the battles, heroisms, faults, sins, and glories of so many centuries of Western Christendom. I had already long loved and worked at Classical and New Testament textual problems, when that zealous Catholic Secular Priest and admirably competent Hebrew Scholar and Old Testament Critic, the late Professor Gustav Bickell, grounded me in Hebrew, and confirmed me in my old, and even then much-tested conviction that there are here dangerously great arrears of work for Christians to get through and of insight for them to acquire, if the Christian faith is to be able again

to confront the world with a sincerity, knowledge, and courage in such intellectual matters equal or superior to that of its opponents or non-adherents. He used to be impressively eloquent on the point that only a large, organic, social religion, indeed a Universal Church, had room for such a thoroughly scholarly and critical conception and execution of Biblical work, and how, as a matter of simple fact, the great founders of Historical and Biblical Criticism had been Catholics; and liked to tell, as indicative of this connection, how, at the time of the Vatican Council, he had found Dr. Döllinger full of an equally contemptuous rejection of two things, the Papal Infallibility Claims and Biblical Criticism, especially in its analysis of the Pentateuch. I worked on after this with a thorough Jewish scholar, and threshed through the Pentateuch, mostly twice, and in many parts three to six or seven times, throwing up as I went along elaborate vocabularies and analyses of the synonyms, styles and conceptions characteristic of the several documents, and carefully testing the greater part of the huge mass of references and comparisons given and instituted by Dillman. My Paper on the Hexateuch, read at the Fribourg Catholic Scientific Congress in 1898, and received with, I believe, sincere applause and certainly no

serious opposition, is but a fragment of the work I have done in this great subject. Thus I feel that I too have a right to speak.

I know well, my dear Friend, how your work stands largely upon the shoulders of three and four generations of illustrious scholars; and that, for our time also, you have, especially in Germany, England, and America, numerous fellow-workers of admirable competence and thoroughness. And I, on a markedly smaller scale, can also rejoice that, among Catholics, I am not alone; there are among them other Pentateuch-workers, some of them with more penetration, others with more work to show than I can claim. Abbé Loisy has given us deep and delicate studies on select passages of Genesis and on the relations of the early Chapters of that Book and the Babylonian Legends. The Jesuit Father von Hummelauer has carefully worked through and published commentaries on the whole Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua; and if his attribution of documents back to Abraham, Noah, even Adam is strangely fantastic, his knowledge of the Hebrew language is thorough, and he has the courageous sincerity to insist upon the presence of at least one large document of a date long after Moses. The Dominican Père Lagrange read a Paper on the

Pentateuch, of remarkable competence and vigour, at the Fribourg Congress in 1898; and his valuable commentary on the Book of Judges shows how firmly he has grasped the great fact and principle of successive documents of widely different ages, which treat repeatedly of the same great national heroes and events, each time according to the stage of religious and moral practice, belief, and aspiration reached by the writer, in part under the persistent stimulus of those original occurrences. The Secular Priests, the late Dr. F. R. Clarke and Professor van den Biesen in England, Professor van Hoenacker and Dr. Poels in Belgium and Holland, Dr. Minocchi in Italy, and Dr. Gigot in your own America, have also, in various degrees and forms, shown an understanding and acceptance of these fundamental critical facts and canons. If we speak then, both you and I speak with much support from past and present scholars.

Indeed, I cannot escape the feeling that it is more than within our competence, that it is our duty, both for you to ask and for me to answer; and this for two reasons. For one thing, I remain as convinced as ever that religion requires a social environment, an historical and institutional training-ground, vehicle, and expression,

a Church; that the primary object and test of such a Church is Religion and not Science or Scholarship; and that the Roman Catholic Church not only contains *de facto* a great mass of Christian faith, truth, and life—this much will now be conceded by all candid Protestants, and can truthfully be asserted, in various degrees and ways, by fair-minded Catholics, of other Christian bodies—but that it represents, with a unique fulness, consciousness and continuity, certain fundamental, inalienable constituents, rights and duties of complete religion. And alongside of this persists the complementary conviction that the different energizings and requirements of man's multiform nature are, at bottom, too deeply interdependent, for the whole man and religion itself not infallibly to suffer in the long run, if his instinct for Science and Scholarship is persistently and gravely thwarted or deflected; that the deepest spirit and the logic immanental to the presuppositions and final positions of Catholicism positively require a sincerely historical and thoroughly critical treatment of the history and literature of the Bible: and yet there, before me, are the facts of the Church-condemnations of critics as great and epoch-making as Richard Simon at the end of the Seventeenth Century, and Alfred Loisy at the beginning of the

Twentieth, with many another trouble threatened or executed, before, between and after these two culminating points, from, say, the time of Erasmus, right down to this last July. And then, for a second thing, I cannot but note that though the Commission's Answer *has* received the Papal sanction, and hence that its proposals should be criticized only under the pressure of serious necessity and only by men thoroughly conversant with the complex critical problems directly concerned; it is not put forward as a Dogmatic Decision, but, apparently, as a simple Direction and Appeal from scholars to scholars. The endorsement of the Opinion by working scholars, simply on the ground of scholarship, would evidently be welcomed by the issuing Authority; and hence the contrary expressions —of difficulty or of sheer inability to apply the proposed solutions to the concrete problems of the case—can hardly be taxed as necessarily impertinent. And if the situation does spontaneously evoke such inability in such workers, notwithstanding their sincere desire to find these suggestions workable: then, to speak now may be a painful, but is surely a strict duty on the part of such of them as have the honour to be Catholics and who love the Church. For the danger here would lie in the situation itself, not

in the respectfully frank admission of its existence: indeed this admission might help to prevent its further accentuation, an accentuation which could not fail to be profoundly damaging to Rome.

II

I do not see how I could materially challenge or add to your Criticism of the present majority or of the spokesmen of the Commission. I have not studied Dom Janssen's works; but I have no reason to think you unfairly prejudiced against him, and certainly he is no Historical Critic, no Old Testament Scholar. Abbé Vigouroux's signature is no doubt much less significant than that of his junior, resident and very active colleague; for the Abbé is now old, after doing much work according to certain preconceptions which younger, fresher minds have found to break down under the stress of the facts when fully and fairly faced. And you admit the sound Hebrew scholarship of a minority of the Commission, even as the Commission stands at present. I will then pass at once to three points concerning the composition and authorship of the Pentateuch, which may help further to illustrate and emphasize your main contentions.

First, then, I would insist anew upon the immense because strictly cumulative force of the argument, grouped by yourself under four headings, for the real existence and the widely different ages of the several documents. It is not merely that in one set of passages we find one vocabulary, and in another set, another vocabulary; in a third set, one style, and in a fourth set, another style; in a fifth set, one type of institution and conception of history, and in a sixth set, another institutional type and historical conception; and in a seventh set, one group of theological and moral ideas, and in an eighth set, another such group. But the domains and frontiers of these different kinds of variation all coincide,—the vocabulary, style, institution, history, ethics, and theology all grow and change *together;* all these variable constituents are, within any one document, at one peculiar stage, predominance or mixture, and all these constituents are, in each of the other documents, at another peculiar stage, predominance and mixture. The vocabulary and style can, of course, be fully realized only by the careful student of the Hebrew text, in its living warp and woof; but good lists of the words and phrases characteristic of the four documents are given by yourself, by Dr. Driver, and by Carpenter and Battersby's *The Hexateuch*, London,

1900, vol. II, pp. 185–221, where J and E together furnish 237 such linguistic peculiarities; D has 120; and P, 220. But these linguistic differences are ever accompanied by differences in the institutions: thus in the "Book of the Covenant," Exodus xxiv. 4–8, incorporated by E, we find the order to throw up an earthen altar and to sacrifice to God thereon, wherever God has vouchsafed some special favour to His worshipper, be this worshipper priest or layman; in D there are the severest threats and penalties against all sacrifices away from the one permanent altar before the Tabernacle; and in P the sacrifices of all true Israelites have, as a matter of course, to take place here, upon a permanent altar of acacia-wood overlaid with brass, and the priests alone may sacrifice the victims. And all these linguistic and institutional differences are ever accompanied by differences in the presentation of the past religious history. Thus in J we get numerous, most ancient, God-loved sanctuaries; and non-localized, improvised, and lay-altar-building and sacrifice is practised by God's friends from the beginning:—Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—all sacrifice in all sorts of places—in accordance with what we know from the Books of Judges, Samuel and Kings to have been practised by the Judges Gideon and

Manoah, by the Kings Saul, David, and Solomon, and by the greatest of the non-literary prophets, Elijah, on Mount Carmel, up to at least five centuries after Moses. In D, represented as to history chiefly by moralizing, hortatory framings to older accounts of the Kings, the old Sanctuaries are, especially from the finding of the "Book of the Law," under King Josiah in 623 B.C. onwards, represented as a snare; and sacrifice away from the central Jerusalem sanctuary appears as a rite practised by Israelites in ignorance, or in a spirit of schism. And in P the legitimate sacrifices are sacrificed throughout at one place only, before the Tabernacle or in the Temple Court, by Aaronic priests alone, and hence as beginning only with the Mosaic Sinaitic dispensation. Hence in the composite account of the Deluge, J makes Noah take seven pairs of every clean, and only one pair of every unclean, animal into the ark, since he requires the former also for the sacrifice which J describes him as offering later on; whilst P gives Noah but one pair of every clean and unclean kind, since in P Noah does not sacrifice. And all these linguistic, institutional, historiographical and historic changes are accompanied throughout by growths in the moral and theological ideas. Thus in J, Jahveh moulds man out of red loam, and builds up woman later

around a rib drawn from that man's side; and Jahveh Himself walks in the Garden in the cool of the evening, and later on comes down to Babel to see how the Tower-building is proceeding. In P, Elohim creates mankind, male and female, in one instant, at the same moment, by His sheer Fiat; and God's transcendence is so carefully guarded that even the homely visitations of the man-like angels, His representatives, so frequent in J, are here nowhere to be found. Multiply such simultaneous shiftings of four or five sets of peculiarities by some fifty to a hundred items within each set; interconnect each item and each set with all the others; realize that these shiftings presuppose their predecessors and prepare their successors: and you will have some notion how strong is this cumulative argument—a rope not to be cut or broken, a steel hawser of the most numerous, manifold and closely-knit strands.

Next, I would point out the unworkableness of the solution suggested by the Commissioners, viz. that Moses entrusted contemporaries of his, say, Aaron, Nadab, or Joshua, with the writing of certain documents, which writings were then revised and issued by Moses himself—even supposing that the great documents of the Pentateuch could be taken as not post-Mosaic. For

such a view, for one thing, gives a strangely elastic interpretation to the strict affirmation of Mosaic authorship: it insists upon Mosaic authorship, even literary authorship, and this, primarily in order thus to satisfy the great "tradition," and yet explains the authorship in a manner that cannot satisfy that "tradition" if taken as evidencing what it is here declared to prove. That tradition is rather of God dictating to Moses, than of Moses dictating to Joshua; of Moses inspired by God, not of Joshua inspired by Moses. What strictly Rabbinical Jew, what correct Mahommedan, would accept such an "Authorship" as the one suggested by the Commission? And if he would not, why let him help to determine us upon so frail and fantastic a construction? For such an hypothesis turns out indeed to be well founded in the case of a prolific modern Novelist, who actually did surround himself with subordinate scribes to whom he allotted the filling-in of the outlines of such and such stories, and whose work was then revised by himself and issued under his name; but we cannot, surely, think of Moses doing so, in proportion as we insist upon the profound importance and the inspired, indeed revealed character of his work and message and upon their completion within his own life-time.

And we have a further, an insuperable difficulty in the fact that all four documents give us characteristically varying versions of solitary interviews and dialogues between Jahveh or Elohim and Moses: since how could Moses commission three other writers to chronicle, each in varying fashion and each in a manner somewhat different to his own, things experienced only by himself?

And thirdly, I would insist with you upon how that immensely powerful cumulative evidence, so impressively reinforced by massive Biblical testimony external to the Pentateuch, simply precludes the possibility of contemporary composition for those great documents. We might as well conceive, in English Constitutional History, the Anglo-Saxon King Alfred, who died in 901 A.D., commissioning the drafter of Magna Charta under the Norman King John, in A.D. 1215, the writer of the Articles of Reform under the Plantagenet King Edward II, in A.D. 1310, the Lord Chancellor More under the Tudor King Henry VIII (More died in A.D. 1535), and the drafter of the Petition of Rights under the Stuart King Charles I in A.D. 1628, to draw up certain laws and histories for him, which he, King Alfred, would then revise and issue under his own name. Or Charlemagne could be taken

as starting-point, with the Emperor Charles V as term of another parallel; or again, St. Louis of France at the head and Napoleon I at the end of another illustrative line of continuity and growth. And seeing that we cannot bring Moses below, say, 1300 B.C.; that D appears to have been the Book of the Law found in 628 B.C.; and that P cannot well have been complete before about 400 B.C.: these three illustrations would not err on the side of excess.

Just a word in addition as to two pit-falls in the way of those who attempt to rebut these conclusions. Nothing here said by us or known to me requires or indeed permits us to consider the laws and customs contained in these documents as necessarily or even only generally no older than the dates we are driven to assign to the documents themselves. It is in many cases demonstrable that those laws are considerably, sometimes immensely, older than their formulation or framework now before us, and some great central enactments doubtless go back to Moses himself. Nor do these our positions of themselves decide anything concerning the historical exactitude of this or that narrative: such an account may, in its present form, be very late, and yet may transmit important details of factual truth; another may be very early and yet be little more

than a symbol or parable, the vehicle of some spiritual or moral experience and truth. Hence no proof as to the probable or certain antiquity of such and such laws, or of the factual exactitude of such and such details of a narrative, still less the simple presence in a story of certain proper names now vouched for by inscriptions as historical, are, of themselves, of any conclusiveness against the late dates of composition of the documents concerned. And on the other hand, a certain schematic selection and resetting among the factual simultaneities and successions of past history, for purposes of illustration and enforcement of the stage of spiritual insight reached by the respective ages and writers of the documents concerned, cannot in honesty be denied. This pragmatism doubtless reaches its highest point in the admittedly very late Book of Chronicles; but even in P it is already most powerfully operative. In this respect also P is closely akin to the priest-prophet, Ezechiel: for just as Ezechiel, though a true prophet and deep spirit—he it is who first proclaims God as the Good Shepherd,—foresees the *future* according to mathematically precise spatial measurements, not one of which came about, so P is a true, indeed deeply spiritual seer of the *past* and of its spiritual significance—to him we owe the magnificent Six-Days' Creation

picture,—and yet his mathematically precise insistences as to time, place, number, succession, and other seemingly factual contexts must be interpreted as liberally and symbolically as they were originally taken by this priest-interpreter.

III

But if even we single scholars have mostly reached such complex conclusions only with difficulty and under the slow pressure of the manifold facts of the case, what chance is there, you may well ask, of the immensely conservative Roman Catholic Church ever accepting, or even frankly and finally tolerating, such historical method, or even only its more assured results? And if we will but look at what has actually happened, where is there any encouragement to be found? In answer I shall point out four most powerful motives and affinities, ineradicable, immanental, which are ever at work to render any full or final exclusion of historic method from Biblical subjects impossible for Catholicism; and shall then consider what facts can be brought forward to rebut certain final misgivings derived from two great matters of fact.

Four necessities, then, are working within Catholicism as such towards a final acceptance,

however slow and cautious, of a consistent and sincere historico-critical method for the Bible also.

Catholicism, for one thing, is essentially not a simple Illuminism or Fideism, but a Religion which, in its completeness, is simultaneously Historical and Institutional, Critical and Speculative, Mystical and Operative, thus calling into play the whole man and his various faculties—sense-perception and memory; analytic and synthetic reason, and feeling; intuition, and volition. But if so, it is wedded, amongst other things, to history, and hence to historic proofs and methods. And in the long run it will be found simply impossible to have one standard of historic method and proof for, say, the legendary character of Pope Joan, or the authenticity and Catholic meaning of St. Irenaeus's testimony to the Roman Church, or the factual reality of the Roman sojourn and martyrdom of St. Peter; and another, a conflicting standard of historical method and proof for, say, the reality of the person of Moses and of his spiritual experience and proclamation of the foundations of the Jewish Law; or the authenticity of the writings of Jeremiah and Ezechiel; or the approximate date of the glorious "Deutero-Isaiah" (Isa. XL. to LXVI.). We can and should be even more

careful, thorough, and modest in our work here than in that there; we should never make an end in improving our dispositions, method, and results; but it is, at bottom, a sheer logical impossibility, and a psychical condition of the most unstable equilibrium or sceptical effect, *both* to appeal to these latter facts, persons, and documents as downrightly historical *and* to refuse to submit them to thorough historical investigation. Every system stands self-condemned that moves, as to its fundamental logic, in a demonstrable vicious circle: nowhere can man both eat his cake and have it.

Catholicism, again, is essentially a missionary, an aggressively universalistic religion, hence inevitably a spirituality that learns as well as teaches, that gets and assimilates as well as moulds and gives. For you cannot teach whom you do not understand, and you cannot win the man with whom you cannot share certain fundamental presuppositions. Hence even if Catholicism, in so far as not missionary, could enmesh itself in the vicious circle just described, it cannot do so, if it would retain a message for, and a hearing from, the educated West-European world, since nothing is more certain than that this cultivated non-Roman Catholic world is, in part unconsciously, often slowly yet everywhere surely,

getting permeated and won by critical standards and methods. A system cannot both claim to teach all the world and erect an impenetrable partition-wall between itself and the educated portion of that world.

Catholicism, once more, is essentially a "Church and Bible," not a "Bible only" religion. Its genius, history, and most elementary defence presuppose the Bible to be a complex and difficult, not a simple and easy literature ; a library, not a book ; a succession of literary precipitates of religion—a religion which, already lived and loved, both corporately and individually, before such registration, comes in time, and now more corporately than individually, to sort out and canonize those precipitates, as so many models and crystallizing-points for further corporate and individual religious life and love. The Church, the Community of believers, first Jewish and then Christian, produced the Bible even more than the Bible produced the Church. And hence the old war-cry of Protestantism, "the Bible and the Bible only," is ceasing, one gladly thinks, to characterize the actual religious convictions of the more historically-trained present-day Protestants. In any case such Bibliolatry is not Catholic. And if the Catholic conception and practice of religion in general, and of the Bible as part of

that larger whole, is not, of course, without its special trials and difficulties, these latter would become speedily unbearable if doubled, indeed trebled, by the addition of some such un-Catholic super-exaltation of the Bible. For thus the unhappy mind would have to bear not only two burdens, each sufficiently heavy by itself, but also the straining, complicating contradiction between the two conceptions.

And finally, Catholicism is essentially a life and an organism that has grown and is growing. Already Vincent of Lerins compares this life to the growth of the human body, self-identical throughout its great changes from one age to the other, an identity resulting from the continuous indwelling of the one body-weaving, body-moulding soul. Indeed, already the Fourth Gospel presents Our Lord as insisting upon the "many things" which His disciples could not bear during His earthly life-time, and upon the Spirit of truth which, later on, would guide them into all truth. Christ as the spreading Vine, and the Kingdom of God as leaven in the paste, would thus not merely extend themselves externally, remaining, within the human apprehensions and wills that accept them, at the same stage of apprehendedness and application; but these our human understandings and elaborations of those

divine realities and influences would pass through various forms and stages. Only in some such way can we understand and defend the strikingly different, though not contradictory variations in the history of even the fundamental Christian and Catholic life and doctrine. Such a development, throughout the strictly revelational period of the Old and New Testaments, has ever been acknowledged by Catholicism on a scale so large as to cover the immense changes from Polygamy to Monogamy and from the *Lex Talionis* to the Law of Forgiveness, since the Church, with grand profundity and courage, refused to follow Marcion and proclaimed the Old Testament to come from the same God as the New. And development, of more than a simply logical, analytical order, is being more and more admitted in detail by Catholics for the much slighter changes observable in Christian Church History. There but remains the scholarly tracing out of the numerous, slow, intermediate steps within the Old Testament right on into the Deutero-canonical Books and even Philo, and the admission of lesser or different though still real growth and variety of apprehension within the New Testament itself. However rightly we may find a certain true uniqueness and the final norm for spiritual truth and practice in Our Lord's

Person, Life, and Teaching, and however legitimately we may talk of a period of Revelation followed by one of simple Assistance: there will, between Christ and His Spirit and the nowhere utterly God-forsaken world into which they have come, ever be a sufficient affinity for the former to be able to penetrate, appropriate, satisfy, and measure all the goodness, truth, and spiritual hunger variously yet ever present in the world. From Moses back to prehistoric times, forward to Christ and on from Christ to the end of time, we thus get *one* great chain of slow, varying, intermittent yet true development occasioned by God in man, and moving from man towards God. And if so, then the chief difficulty raised by the critical view of the various documents disappears: for such a truly dynamic conception would englobe and spiritualize it all.

You yourself, my dear Friend, more or less accept these four great principles, I think, and will admit them to be immanent to the logic of the Catholic position. But two final, matter-of-fact objections might plausibly be urged against us both. First, then, is not your plea for "peace" really an invitation to further war? Is it an appeal for the union, in these Biblical matters, of still by far the greater number of zealous believers in the several Christian bodies? No;

it is a call for the acceptance, on the part of all these simple traditional Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant, of the conclusions of the critics, whether Protestant or Catholic; and those believers are a compact many, and these critics are a scattered few. Would it not be right and great for the Pope, the supposed enemy of the Bible, to help to save the Bible for the Anti-Papists also? And it is certain that,— what with the older Protestantism having taken over much of even the non-obligatory, current mediæval and antique Catholic teaching in the matter, and post-Tridentine Catholic theologians having largely lived to fight fighting Protestants and thus become strangely like them, — such an alliance of all the "Traditionalists," or "believers," against all the scholars, or "Rationalists," such a combination is already more or less in operation. Yet such a combination could not be formally organized or strongly emphasized without speedily revealing its impracticable character. For the immanental peculiarities of the Catholic position would soon break up such an alliance from the Roman side; whilst on the Protestant side, even such strongly individualistic Bible-Protestants as the Congregationalists, the descendants of Cromwell and Milton, are steadily maturing a critically-trained

body of Ministers. Hence if by peace you mean a solid and abiding concord between such elements and conceptions as have expansive force and a fruitful future in them, then you are right, even if, to one who would refuse to look elsewhere than back and upon the surface of events, we might appear as but so many isolated malcontents or idealists who can safely be left to themselves.

And next,—and here we have by far the most formidable objection, and one which only the actual course of events and Rome's own action can adequately solve,—are we not indeed dreamers and impotent optimists? Is there no such thing as a law of existence by which all institutions, however divinely inspired may have been their services and however elemental may be the necessities to which they ministered, pass, in our poor human world of change, through an inevitable cycle of beautiful upward growth and expansion, of splendid maturity and balance, and of pathetic ossification and of lingering but sure decay? The Roman Catholic Church is indeed the mother of West-European civilization; but can a man enter a second time into his mother's womb? The Roman Catholic system of life may indeed involve the four positions we have described; but what if its life be insufficient to one more such mighty renovation? This

Opinion of the Biblical Commission, is surely but one link in a chain of official attempts at the suppression or emasculation of Science and Scholarship, beginning indeed with Erasmus and culminating with Richard Simon and Alfred Loisy, but never entirely absent, as witness countless workers' lives, well-known to their fellow-workers. When and where has Rome quite finally abandoned any position, however informal and late its occupation, and however demonstrated its untenableness? Where, in particular, is the case of its permission to hold critical and historical views even distantly comparable in their deviation from "tradition" to those here presented by us? And if no such cases can be found, then, surely, Rome stands utterly discredited: for a body that clings, in spite of any and all evidence, to simply everything, has of itself discounted its persistence in any contention whatsoever.

Now here I cannot fully arrest this blow: Rome alone can do so, and not by words, but by deeds. Yet I can break it sufficiently, I think, to encourage men who attempt to combine religion and science—and only to such men would I speak—in working on at such attempts, even on the ground of the demonstrable facts and events ready to the hand of him who will candidly seek and face them. I would then point out

first that *all* Religious Institutions without exception are at their worst in the matter of their relations with Science and Scholarship, doubtless chiefly because they exist, at bottom, as the incorporations and vehicles of requirements and realities, deeper and more immediately important and necessary than are even Science and Scholarship. Man has to live as a man, to keep and constitute himself a spiritual being, fighting inch by inch against dissolution into a mere shifting phenomenalism, or against those passions that would turn him into an ape or tiger; and he has to die the physical death, letting slip away all he sees and touches and facing the darkness with unshaken trust. And he never did, he never will nor can, thus live and die, and immolate his clamorous selfishness for his own ever largely latent personality, for those swift-passing shadows, his fellow men, or for the truth even of Science itself, from motives simply of Science, but only from the far more immediate and elemental incentives and certainties of spiritual faith and devotedly creative love. All these Religions and Churches are not, then, mistaken in the primary objects of their work, or in holding them to be thus primary,—the highest and deepest given to man; nor do they fail to reach these great objects, even if, measured by other

ends and standards, they all look like sorry failures. Certainly it is not for Protestant ecclesiastical bodies to throw the stone at Rome in these matters : if Rome has had Erasmus, Simon, Loisy, the others have had Colenso, Robertson-Smith, and yourself. Thus even now, Catholics have not had any solemn condemnation of Pentateuchal criticism, and the Protestant Churches have had three.

I would point out next, that Science and Scholarship, after having for some four centuries slowly proved their formidable power, mostly as though this power were unlimited and destructive only, are themselves now coming to discover fully their own respective essential methods, ends, levels and limitations. If they are, in the long run, simply irresistible within these limits of their own, they as demonstrably presuppose and require a fuller, deeper world of reality and life than is theirs ; and religion will be able to find room for these other levels of life, on the day when it has fully learnt, on its side, that it cannot henceforth attain again to its own deepest fruitfulness, unless it can and will frankly accept and encourage such autonomies within its own ampler life. Theology will only slowly and approximately be able to resolve the antinomies thus occasioned, but the religious soul will again be

conscious of how much fuller are the religious life and reality than are even their best analyses; and the sciences themselves will then be pointing to, without themselves directly reaching, religion as thus practised and understood.

And finally, I would note the vicissitudes of two long critical campaigns, and how, if we take their quite recent final upshot together, they certainly amount, on the part of Rome, to an ultimate docility to established facts and to a power of intellectual rejuvenation equal in amount to anything here expected by us. There was the long-drawn controversy as to the date and authorship of the Areopagite writings. For well-nigh a millennium this considerable mass of documents was held throughout Latin Christendom to be the work of St. Paul's Athenian Convert Dionysius, composed in about 90 A.D. St. Thomas Aquinas incorporates them all; he, as the entire Middle-Ages, builds his Mystical Theology upon Dionysius; the Areopagite stands here immediately after Scripture and before Aristotle himself. Indeed, the great Spanish Mystics of the sixteenth century are still full of Dionysian influence. Not till the fifteenth century is a single voice raised against the attribution; and even as late as 1845 and 1865, could a Catholic future Archbishop and a Jesuit, the Abbé Darboy

and the Père Dulac, be found stoutly to defend the authenticity, the last of these believers being the Anglican Rev. James Parker, who in 1897 still stoutly rejects as "rationalism," "conceit," etc., the scholarly labours of some four centuries. Yet now the chief living authorities on the subject are the Jesuit Father Stiglmayr and the Secular Priest, Dr. Hugo Koch, who, with full ecclesiastical authorization, have finally demonstrated those writings to be the work of some Greek Christian Bishop, taken largely all but *verbatim* from the Heathen Neo-Platonist Proclus, in about 490 A.D. It is true that these pseudo-Areopagite writings never claimed to be Scripture; yet they were of incomparably more direct influence with Christians during those thirty and more generations, than the Pentateuch has ever been. There was again the equally long controversy as to the authenticity of the "Comma Johanneum," the text of the "Three Heavenly Witnesses" in the First Epistle of St. John. Erasmus had rejected it; Richard Simon in 1689 had plainly shown the hopelessness of any critical defence of it; and in England Richard Porson gave it, in 1790, so effectually the *coup de grace*, that when in 1881 the Revisers of the Authorized Version simply excluded the verse, not

even that jaunty, undaunted Tory, Dean Burgon, had a word to say against their action.

Simon had indeed been condemned wholesale by Rome; yet Catholic scholars also had continued to help to prove the necessity of such an exclusion, the most thorough being the Abbé Paulin Martin, in 1886. But on January 13th, 1897, there appeared, approved and confirmed by Pope Leo XIII, a Decree of the Holy Office, the highest Roman tribunal next after the Pope himself, and which, unlike the Biblical Commission, claims directly doctrinal authority, giving a negative answer to the question, "Whether it is safe to deny, or at least to call in doubt, the authenticity of the text of St. John, in the First Epistle, chapter v., verse 7, 'For there are three that give testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.'"—Well, and what happened then? Catholic scholars promptly pointed out the unworkableness of an insistence upon this text's original appurtenance to that Epistle, or indeed to any other part of the New Testament. And eight years later (1905), the Catholic Priest, Professor Dr. Künstle, issued a dissertation "Das Comma Johanneum"; it bore the *Imprimatur* of the Archbishop of Freiburg, and

was printed and published by the great Papal publishers, Herder. This *brochure* formally demonstrates what Abbé Martin and Dom Amelli, O.S.B., had already respectively more or less guessed and propounded,—that the "Comma" was composed in Spain, in 390 A.D., by the Heresiarch Priscillian, to propagate his Pan-Christian Heresy; and that this gloss, slightly retouched, then found its way, in part rapidly, into the Latin New Testament. The text, as you know, has, for a thousand years, been one of the chief Biblical testimonies to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in the Latin Church; and for some two centuries and a half scholastic theologians have, with their usual tough and cheery absoluteness, ignored or rejected the adverse conclusions of all competent critics within and without the Church. Did it not then look as if that high and clear Roman Decree had finally canonized the contention of the theologians in a matter of historical criticism against all the critics, and that a Catholic as such stood strictly pledged henceforth to deny his scientific conscience or to leave the Church? —What would so greatly have rejoiced all anti-Roman spirits did not happen. And why not? Simply because the necessities and laws immanent to this kind of subject-matter and of its

proof had been overlooked from zeal for other, in their place, most vital interests; and because those immanental necessities operated on and on, quietly, inevitably, at their own more superficial level of work and reality, in much the same way as, at the deepest level of experience and life, forces are ever energizing for religion and the Church herself. In neither case are these laws and forces the arbitrary inventions of men, nor so much clay in their hands; along the shallower, the scientific level they are no more produced by captious conceit or by a libertine private judgment on the part of scholars, than at the deepest, spiritual level, they are effected by priestly tyranny and greed.

What happened with respect to the Areopagite and the "Comma Johanneum" will doubtless happen with respect to the authorship of the Pentateuch. For if in the latter case we are dealing with Scripture, as against the Areopagite who only claimed to be sub-apostolic; and with a problem of far greater extent and complication than that of the "Comma": yet both the Areopagite and the "Comma" by their contents interested theologians far more directly than ever the Pentateuch did; the Areopagite had to be admitted as chiefly made up from heathen sources, whereas the Pentateuch remains a distinctly,

overwhelmingly Jewish book; and the "Comma's" authenticity had been insisted upon by a doctrinally far more weighty tribunal than is the Commission, whilst the particular negative solution now formally allowed, goes much further to the left than anything required by solid criticism of the Pentateuch, which remains as Biblical and inspired as before.

Indeed, it is the simple fact that the chief trials to faith in the Pentateuch are only now and thus removed, and certain powerful aids to belief are only thus acquired. For we now have no more a single, all but hopelessly self-contradictory work, but a library of successive documents, each thoroughly consistent with itself. And we have not a single direct divine revelation fiercely insistent upon endless ritual details, centuries before they were wanted and before they ceased to be fully contravened by God's closest friends in Israel; but we have a succession of divinely willed and blessed expansions and adaptations of an original, divinely suggested and sanctioned nucleus of fundamental truths and ordinances—a succession occurring in proportion as these developments were wanted to strengthen the Jewish faith and community, and to keep them pure from absorption by the heathen, unto

the day when they would form the cradle and first environment of the universal religion, Christianity.

Let me also, my dear Friend, finish upon this note of Christianity and its immanental affinity with all the Beautiful, the True and the Good throughout this beautiful, true, good world of God. Whatever the Christian spirit continues to penetrate (we both feel this deeply), is endowed with undecaying vitality, with the power of ever breaking anew through the sterilizing isolation of selfishness and self-sufficiency, through any and all substitutes for the simple service of the servants of God. We both know how deep is the world's debt to the great Saints and Pontiffs of the Roman Church. And as to the present Holy Father, we are both of us well aware of how zealously he encourages the scholarly translation and wide distribution of the Gospels in Italy; indeed, you have the high honour of knowing him personally, and of vividly realizing how selfless are his motives, and how truly evangelical are his ends. We assuredly can and ought, both of us, to pray, will and work that God may abundantly bless these great aims and ends of him who for you also is the chief Bishop of Christendom; and that his advisers, in the manifold mixed

subject-matters which they have to prepare and to bring before him, may have a vivid realization of the difficulty and complexity, the importance, rights, and duties of those other departments of life—Science and Scholarship—lest these forces, ignored or misunderstood, bring inevitable obstruction and eclipse to those direct and central interests and ideals which are the fundamental motives of all spiritual life, and the true mainspring and impregnable citadel of the Christian, Catholic and Roman Church.

Yours, my dear Professor,

Ever sincerely,

FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL.

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